

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Lionhead Ranch Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date:	July 2014
Proponent:	Dennis Davaz—RY Timber, Livingston MT
Location:	SE ¼, Sec. 13, T3S R12E
County:	Sweet Grass

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Dennis Davaz of RY Timber in Livingston, MT has requested a Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) Alternative Practice (AP) for approximately 300 linear feet of a class 2 stream without connectivity to another body of water. Normally the channel does not flow more than six months per year but based on local snow pack conditions this year there is a possibility that flow will continue more than 6 months, thereby making this a class 2 stream. The request is to allow a skid trail construction and equipment operation on the skid trail within the boundaries of the SMZ parallel to the stream channel but not crossing the stream channel directly for approximately 165'. The SMZ has been extended to 100' due to slopes over 35%. The skid trail would be located between 50' and 100' from the stream and would not come within 50' of the stream. All other SMZ requirements would be met. According to the SMZ law (*Rule 4: [36.11.304 (1)] and [36.11.304 (2)(c) (i)]*) equipment operation in the SMZ will not be met and displacement of soil will occur, a request for an AP has been received by the Montana DNRC Southern Land Office. This is to analyze the potential effects to determine if no significant impacts would occur from the proposed AP. To maintain SMZ integrity all operations will meet 36.11.304 (2) (c) (ii) *protects and retains shrubs and submerchantable trees to the fullest extent possible* (iii) *does not remove stumps and* (iv) *otherwise conserves the integrity of the SMZ.*

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Public scoping was not completed for this EA Checklist. On 6/4/2014 SLO Forester Brad Shoemaker spoke with Angie Covey, Lionhead Ranch Manager to discuss the proposed AP. Angie had seen the site and was in support of the proposed AP as it was applied for.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

No other governmental agencies have jurisdiction.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative

Meet all SMZ rules.

Action Alternative

Allow for construction of the skid trail through the upper 50' of SMZ for approximately 165' and for equipment operation on the skid trail to remove additional volume of timber from the property for an estimated 1-2 days. All trees and vegetation below the proposed skid trail would be retained and a slash filter windrow

would be constructed at the toe of the displaced soil and all areas of disturbed soil will be seeded within 72 hours of operation completion. Water bars would also be installed approximately every 50' upon completion. All other SMZ requirements will be met.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

No impacts should occur. All operations will be performed on dry soil.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The six functions of the SMZ as identified in the SMZ law (77-5-301[1] MCA) will be maintained.

1. Acts as a sediment filter to maintain water quality
 - a. The ability for the SMZ to act as a sediment filter will remain intact as no part of the proposed AP enters the 50' buffer.
 - b. The installed slash filter windrow and seed will provide additional sediment filtration within the SMZ
 - c. All vegetation in the 50' buffer will be intact
2. Provides shade to regulate stream temperature
 - a. The ability to provide shade is maintained by leaving all trees within the 50' buffer and retaining at least 50% of the trees greater than or equal to 8" DBH on each side of the stream or 5 trees per 100' segment, whichever is greater.
3. Supports diverse and productive aquatic and terrestrial riparian habitats
 - a. Aquatic and terrestrial riparian habitats will be fully protected as the proposed AP will occur between 50' and 100' from the stream channel in an area dominated by upland forest without riparian characteristics.
4. Protect the stream channel and banks
 - a. Full protection of the stream channel and banks is maintained by keeping equipment and harvest operations as well as soil displacement out of the 50' buffer.
5. Provides large, woody debris that is eventually recruited into a stream to maintain riffles, pools, and other elements of channel structure
 - a. The retained trees will adequately provide woody debris for future recruitment and channel structure will be maintained as operations for the proposed AP are more than 50' away from the stream channel.

6. Promotes floodplain stability
 - a. This area is not in the floodplain.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No impacts are expected.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The proposed AP would not change forest species composition or vegetation cover. Additional acres of timber harvest will occur outside the area but the harvest is being conducted as a thinning/ group shelterwood and adequate stocking is retained on site to maintain the quality of vegetation cover.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The small, limited area will not impact any fish as the stream does not support fish and lacks connectivity to any other bodies of water.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified this area as being within the Main Boulder River area which provides or potentially provides habitat for Grizzly Bear, Lynx Wolf and Wolverine as well as genetically pure Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) and other species such as the harlequin duck. The small area of impact (165' of skid trail and 300 linear feet of SMZ) has little impact on any of these species, particularly the riparian species since the stream lacks connectivity with another body of water and the genetically pure YCT are upstream of the closest part of the Boulder River. Other species in the area such as Grizzly Bear, Wolf, Lynx and Wolverine will not be impacted as the timeframe for operations associated with the AP are very short in nature at an estimated 1-2 days.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No identified sites.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No impacts are expected.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no known environmental documents pertaining directly to this AP area.

Montana DNRC published an EA Checklist related to a land use license #6261 located directly to the east of this area which allowed for use of established roads for hauling timber out to a public road across two state sections. That EA Checklist can be found here:

https://dnrc.mt.gov/EnvironmentalDocuments/June/LUL_EA_EastBoulderHaulRoad_130612.pdf

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

None

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

None

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

None

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

None

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

None

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The Action Alternative is not affected by any known zoning or management plans and would not impact management of state, county, USFS, Tribal or BLM property.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

None

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

None

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

None

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Bradley M. Shoemaker	Date: 6/4/2014
	Title: SLO Area Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

NONE

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EIS

☐

More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Matt Wolcott Title: Southern Land Office, Area Manager
Signature:  Date: June 09 14	

State of Montana
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

APPLICATION FOR SMZ ALTERNATIVE PRACTICE

Landowner: HAAS REAL PROPERTY TRUST dba LIONHEAD RANCH

Address: PO BOX 510, M'LEOD, MT Phone C/O TOREY COVEY, MANAGER
Number: (406) 932-6183 59042

Contractor: RY TIMBER, INC

Address: PO BOX 220, TOWNSEND, MT Phone 59644-0220
Number: (406) 220-0102 DENNIS DAVAZ

Person Legally Responsible for Compliance with SMZ
Law: RY TIMBER, INC

Hazard Reduction Agreement (HRA)
Number: 48-B-41944 AREA-50
UNIT-505

Site Specific Alternative Practice
Requested:

DESIGNATED SKID TRAIL THROUGH THE UPPER 50' OF A 100' SMZ
FOR APPROXIMATELY 165 FEET.

Other Alternatives Considered and Justification for Proposed Alternative

Practice: CUT TRAIL OUTSIDE SMZ - TOO MUCH DISTURBANCE

Planned Mitigation

Measures: WATER BAR AND SEED UPON COMPLETION

Starting Date: ASAP - ONE DAY Completion

Date: JUNE 11, 2014 APPROX.

Legal Description: SE 1/4 Section 13 Township 35 Range 12E County SWEETGRASS

Lineal Extent Along Stream: 300' SMZ

Width: 50 TO 100' SMZ

Stream Class (circle one): One Two Three

Wetlands Present Yes ☒ No

I week to do.

*Slash within +
waterbars every 50' in SMZ*

*goes underground.
Plant indicator sig
NOT a wetland @
lower extent*

Dennis Davaz, Forester
RY TIMBER, INC.
6-2-14

MAP DETAIL FOR

AP REQUEST

HAAS REAL PROPERTY TRUST

CONTRACTOR - RY TIMBER

6-2-14 DMD

Class 2 based on
possible flow 6+ m/y

SECTION 13 - HAAS

3ch in SMZ w/
a little excavation by Dozer

Leave trees
downslope

T35; RIZE

SECTION 24 - BLM

LOCATED CORNERS

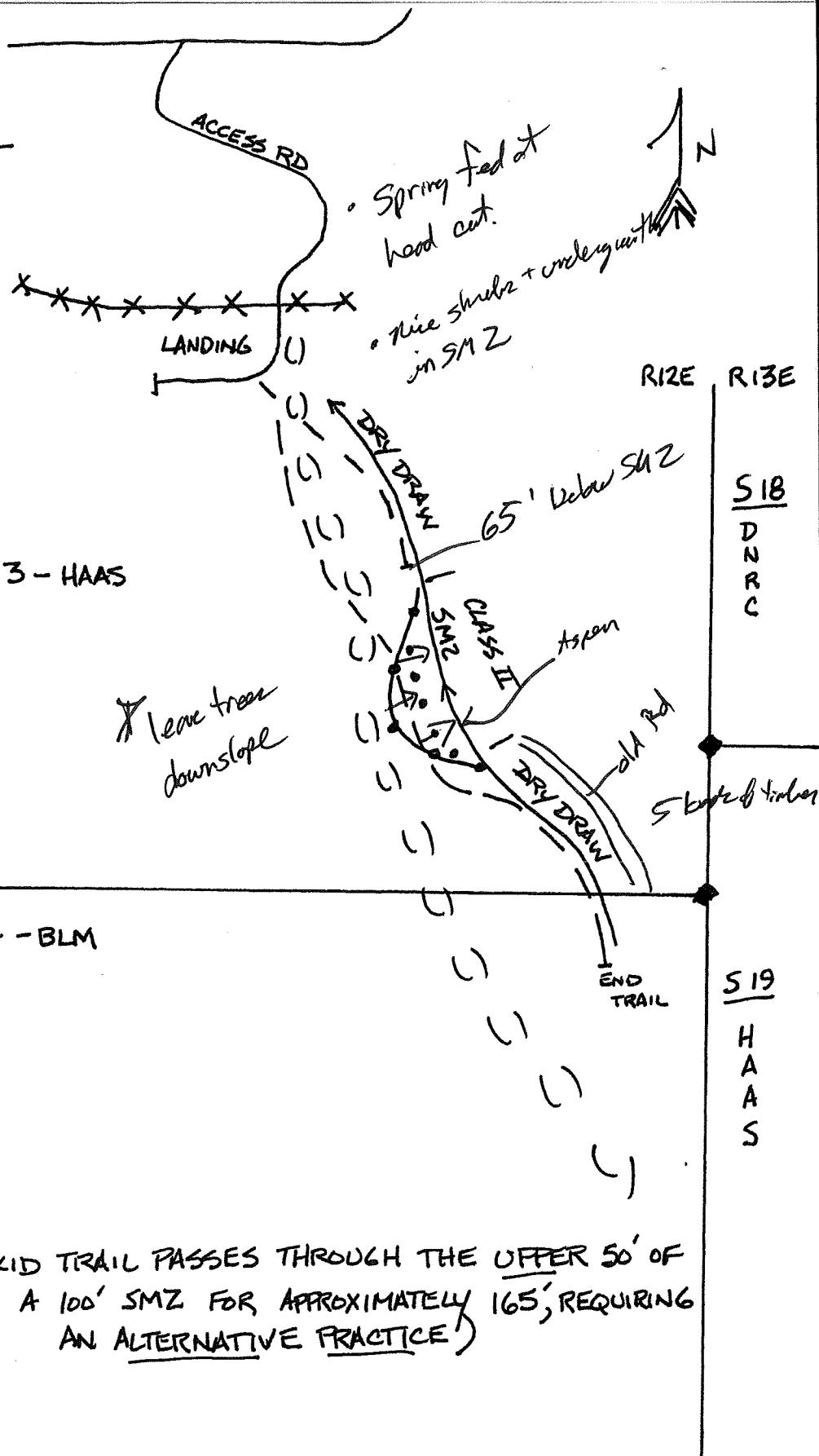
() RIDGE

↖ DRAW/SMZ

SKID TRAILS (SKID TRAIL PASSES THROUGH THE UPPER 50' OF
A 100' SMZ FOR APPROXIMATELY 165', REQUIRING
AN ALTERNATIVE PRACTICE)

• • 50' SMZ LOCATION

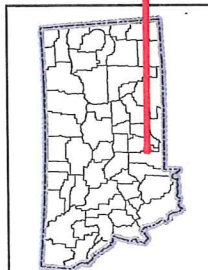
SMZ BOUNDARY



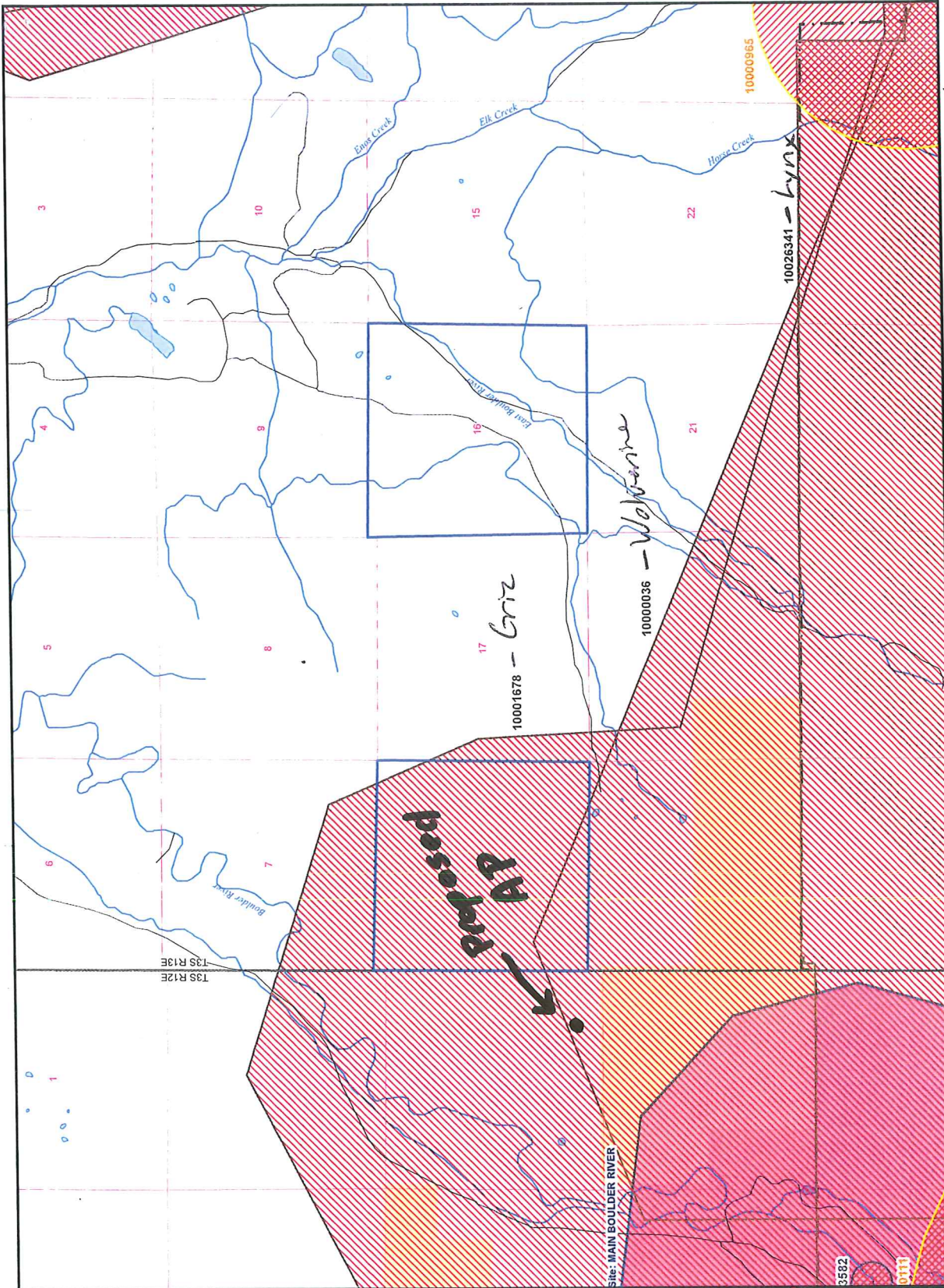
Montana Species of Concern East Boulder RTE

SPECIES OF CONCERN: A legend feature representing only what is shown on the map. It does not represent the spatial location of the feature.

	NonVascular Plants
	Vascular Plants
	Invertebrates
	Amphibians
	Fish
	Reptiles
	Birds
	Mammals
	Sites
	Wetland Types
	Lake
	River
	Freshwater Pond
	Freshwater Emergent Wetland
	Freshwater Scrub-Shrub Wetland
	Freshwater Forested Wetland
	Riparian Emergent
	Riparian Scrub-Shrub
	Riparian Forested



Not all legend items may occur on the map.
Features shown on this map do not imply public access to any lands.
This map displays management status, which may vary from event to event.



Montana Natural Heritage Program
1515 East Sixth Ave., Helena, MT 59620-1820
406 444-5334 <http://mnhp.org> mnhp@mt.gov

Map Document: K:\REQUESTS\13\WT13\m0009913\m0009913.mxd (3/14/2013)